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ABSTRACT

One of the major purposes of values education is to help students develop more complex ways of reasoning--to facilitate cognitive development. The purpose of moral education in a cognitive developmental framework becomes the stimulation of the student's capacity for moral judgment. With this goal in mind, the teacher must first be prepared to carefully examine his or her own moral values before entering the classroom. The teacher must have knowledge of the pedagogy of moral discussion. This paper outlines briefly certain characteristics of teaching methods to be used in values education. The teacher must be adept at utilizing questioning techniques to elicit from students constructive social interaction and respect for others' opinions and positions. The teacher should recognize the various developmental stages manifest by his or her students. Values education actually teaches students a cognitive developmental approach for pursuing their own education after the formal educational process has ended. (Author/DS)

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OSSC BULLETIN

MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

by

Richard H. Hersh
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Oregon School Study Council
Vol. 20, No. 5
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2

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PREFACE

Should values conflicts and moral issues be avoided in the classroom . . . should they be the sole concern of the family, church, and institutions outside the school? Should teachers avoid values issues because they are complex and not easily answered by a "right or wrong"?

In an article titled "Conducting Moral Discussions in Classrooms" B. K. Beyer states:

> Regardless of the specific techniques used in conducting a moral discussion, however, the process of confronting a dilemma, taking a tentative position and examining and reflecting on the reasoning behind various positions remain essential activities. Crucial, too, are the student-to-student interaction, the constant focus on moral issues and reasoning, and the emphasis on a supportive trusting, informal classroom atmosphere. The extent to which the teacher can direct the entire process without assuming an expository or authoritarian role largely determines the success of a moral discussion.

With such background issues, Richard Hersh and Diana Paolitto have written an article which is the source of this month's OSSC Bulletin. The topic is not simple . . . neither can the topic be approached adequately in simple terms. Studies reveal that the discussion of moral dilemmas in the classroom is infrequent and often can be classified as a relatively new experience for most children in adolescence. It is probable that our society can no longer pretend this is not a legitimate area of concern for the schools.

In this Bulletin the authors take an analytical look at the apparent need for moral discussions in schools as well as the complications inherent in trying to meet this responsibility. Dick Hersh is

the Associate Dean for Teacher Education in the College of Education at the University of Oregon and Diana Paolitto is in the Center for Moral Education at Harvard University. Their topic is difficult . . . but it is of basic importance to our school youth and to our society.

Kenneth A. Erickson
Executive Secretary
Oregon School Study Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Development as the Aim of Education	3
The Teacher as Developmental Educator	6
Prerequisite Conditions for Stimulating Moral Development in the Classroom	10
Trust and Respect	11
Social Role-Taking	13
Moral Discussion: A Vehicle for Stimulating Moral Development	17
Conclusion	23
References	25

MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Introduction

Teachers are constantly confronted in the classroom with values conflicts and moral issues. Values are private concerns, we think, to be left to the family, church, and other institutions outside the school. But in a world of "future shock," accentuated by television and travel, our exposure to a myriad of values is multiplied. Such issues as war, political deceit, racial conflict, and unemployment bombard teachers and students and demand attention. Yet teachers fear these issues, not because they are unaware of what is happening, but because values issues represent a complexity not easily reducible to "right or wrong" on a test.

There is another set of values inherent to the classroom itself and often more hidden from teachers and students than the values conflicts presented by the society at large. These are the values reflected in <u>how</u> students and teachers interact in the classroom and school—the process of schooling itself, identified by Jackson (1968) as "the hidden curriculum." Teachers tell students what to do, where to sit, when to talk. They judge what is right and wrong behavior in school. Teachers express their values when they stress individual competition for grades rather than cooperation. They reflect their values in their dress, language, and non-verbal communication patterns.

What values are being taught? Conformity to authority? Valuing the thoughts of others more than one's own? Deceit? A teacher's

emphasis on the establishment of order and the maintenance of rules may be justifiable in the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning, but such practice may inadvertently lead to the formation of values not intended by the teacher. In a democratic society which disclaims unquestioned obedience to authority and conformity to the group, educational institutions often teach values which are antithetical to our stated democratic beliefs.

Perhaps the most pervasive attempt to recognize the legitimacy of the study of values in schools is the values clarification approach (Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1966). Proponents of values clarification acknowledge that values are not absolute. In addition, they are concerned with the descriptive "is," rather than the prescriptive "ought." "What do you do?" demands a different type of explanation than "What ought you to do?" The absence of prescriptive (should/ought) questions in values clarification is related to a failure to distinguish between moral and non-moral issues. What this educational approach lacks is the substance to help students confront questions of ethics, issues of "basic principles, criteria, or standards by which we are to determine what we morally ought to do, what is morally right or wrong, and what our moral rights are" (Frankena, 1963, p. 47). This limitation tends to reduce the complexity of values issues, to avoid moral controversies which values conflicts usually cause, and unwittingly to teach a system of values relativity that prevents rather than promotes resolution of conflicting values. For these reasons teachers require a broader conception of values education.

Lawrence Kohlberg's work in moral development offers an approach which confronts these limitations. His work in developmental psychology, based on the work of John Dewey and Jean Piaget, requires reconsideration of the role of teacher. Teaching within a cognitive developmental framework demands a philosophical, psychological, and educational perspective that is significantly different from that provided by traditional teacher training or in-service education. Such a reformulation of the teacher's role does not mean that what teachers presently know or do is ineffective or unnecessary. Rather, an understanding of moral development may provide an explanation of the complexity of the interaction between teacher and student which may help to inform teacher behavior.

A major goal of the teacher who embraces cognitive developmental psychology is not simply to help students accumulate knowledge, but to help them develop more complex ways of reasoning. In essence, the teacher wants to facilitate intellectual, or cognitive, development. Moral judgment is defined as that aspect of intellectual functioning which focuses on a person's ability to reason about moral questions. The purpose of moral education from a cognitive developmental framework therefore becomes the stimulation of the student's capacity for moral judgment.

Development as the Aim of Education

Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) assert that two major ideologies dominate moral education. The first of these, the "romantic" ideology, stems

from a maturationist theory of development, in which the child's growth is a naturally unfolding process. According to this view, the aim of education is to nurture the individual, to help the child to realize the full potential that already exists inside him or her. The educator's task is to eliminate any restrictive environmental barriers which might obstruct the flowering of the individual. Kohlberg and Mayer maintain that educational objectives within this ideology are characterized by a "bag of virtues" approach—that is, by a set of broadly conceived traits which together characterize a "healthy" personality.

The second and most common ideology to American schooling is the "cultural transmission" approach to learning. The task of the educator within this framework is to teach students the knowledge and virtues of past experience, including the social and moral rules of the culture. Educational goals within this ideology demand adjustment or "socialization" to the prevailing norms. The cultural transmission model is also considered by Kohlberg and Mayer to rely on a "bag of virtues" rationale, one which does not examine any philosophical principles to justify moral education. Thus, important questions are neglected by educators within the cultural transmission framework: What is the basis on which certain "prevailing norms" are selected? What should a person believe when one cultural belief comes into conflict with another?

Kohlberg and Mayer argue that neither of the above ideologies results in effective moral education. Both stress the relativity of values. Both leave unresolved the question of how to walk the tightrope between indoctrination and laissez-faire values education. Values

clarification, for example, has been hailed for its welcomed reversal of moral indoctrination. But after teachers have helped students "clarify" their values, two questions remain: How does "clarifying" one's values relate to the development of a consistent moral philosophy? And how does one face the problem of values relativity if each value is "different" rather than "better" than another?

The third ideology, which Kohlberg and Mayer label "progressivism," attempts to confront these philosophical questions as part of its conception of moral education. The "progressive" school of thought suggests that education ought to promote the child's natural interaction with a changing society and environment. Development is not a naturally unfolding process as assumed by the romantics; rather it is a progression toward greater logical complexity through an invariant sequence of stages. The goal of education is the attainment of higher stages of development in adulthood, not merely a healthy childhood. Thus an educational environment should stimulate moral development by providing genuine moral problems or conflicts to be resolved. Educative experience should require the child to think in increasingly complex ways. Knowledge is seen not as a "thing" to be acquired but as an active change in the child's pattern of reasoning brought about by resolving moral conflict.

The "progressive" conception of cognition assumes that mental processes are structures—internally organized wholes or systems which relate one idea to another. These systems or structures function according to logical "rules" for processing information or connecting

events. The cognitive structures consist of active processes which depend on experience to produce change, or development, in the way the individual makes sense of the world. Cognitive development therefore results from the dialogue between the child's structures and the complexity presented by the environment. This interactionist definition of moral development demands an environment which will facilitate dialogue between the self and others. The process of moral development involves both stimulation of reasoning to higher levels and expansion of reasoning to new areas of thought. The more people encounter situations of moral conflict that are not adequately resolved by their present reasoning structure, the more likely they are to develop more complex ways of thinking about and resolving such conflicts.

The Teacher as Developmental Educator

The teacher who intends to stimulate moral development must first do some careful thinking along several main dimensions. As in any area of teaching the moral educator needs to acquire a certain body of knowledge, in this case the theory of moral development and instructional skills in moral education. As a developmentalist the moral educator must become more than a specialist in a specific body of knowledge. The teacher's knowledge of moral development is the starting point and the means by which the student's education becomes possible. The teacher's theoretical understanding is the basis on which interaction is stimulated between what is inside the student's head and what exists in the world. The teacher's task is to empower developmental theory with

substantive meaning for a specific population who are at a certain period in their development; that is, to think about the developmental characteristics of a particular group of children or adolescents with whom one is working in order to be able to design appropriate educational experiences that will increase their development (Mosher, 1975).

On the one hand, thinking about moral development is an expansive activity, since the development of moral reasoning parallels such other areas of human development as intellectual and ego development. In addition, the biological model of cognitive developmental theory is in itself expansive, based on the organism's struggle toward adaptation through increasing differentiation (i.e., complexity) in its interactions with the environment. Still a further feature of expansive thinking for the teacher as developmentalist involves the philosophical aspects of moral development theory. In a very real sense, the teacher is asked to become a moral philosopher. The moral educator is asked to test one's own limits as a rational adult as a prerequisite for asking students to reason philosophically.

Learning about moral development with regard to a particular period of childhood or adolescence is, on the other hand, a narrowing and refining activity for the moral educator. The more that a teacher's developmental knowledge about a particular group of children or adolescents is specific and defined, the more likely will educational experiences designed to stimulate development be effective. The junior-high-school teacher working with children at the transition to conventional moral reasoning ability, for example, will be thinking about educational

experiences effective in stimulating their development to conventional moral reasoning. Moral conflicts surrounding friendships, family, or other small groups of people tend to elicit stage-three reasoning. The teacher working with high school seniors, who are likely to be at the conventional level of moral reasoning, needs to consider situational conflicts that are very different. Issues focusing on the law, authority, and religious beliefs for example, relate to the developmental transition to post-conventional thinking, appropriate for this group of adolescents.

The stimulation of moral development requires not only a reconceptualization of teacher as developmentalist and philosopher, but also a focus on skills which help the teacher create the conditions for specific modes of classroom interaction. Such interaction requires that students go beyond the mere sharing of information; they must reveal thoughts which concern their basic beliefs. The theory of moral development demands self-reflection stimulated by dialogue. The teacher within this framework must be concerned with four types of interaction: (1) student dialogue with self, (2) student dialogue with other students, (3) student dialogue with teacher, and (4) teacher dialogue with self. Ultimately the interaction-dialogue process is intended to stimulate student reflection upon one's own thinking process. It is the student's dialogue with self that creates internal cognitive conflict. The need to resolve such conflict eventually results in stage change. Teachers may stimulate student reflection by encouraging and facilitating dialogue between students and between teacher and student.

These interactions expose students to stages of thinking above their own and thus stimulate them to move beyond their present stage of thinking. Finally, such a process should also result in the teacher's dialogue with self, since the teacher may also grow in such a process.

Further, a climate of fairness must be created as a pre-condition to such dialogue. The concept of fairness, or justice, involves a regard for the rights of each individual in the classroom. A "fair" decision-making process therefore takes into account the rights and interests of each member (Kohlberg, Wasserman, & Richardson, 1975). The most effective environment for this task is postulated to be as close an approximation of democracy as possible, since in a democratic setting each person is equal to every other.

Lewin (1948) suggests that only through actual experience with democratic methods can one learn the peculiar conduct of a democracy. These experiences include responsibility toward the group, ability to recognize differences of opinion without the condemnation of others, and "readiness" to accept and give criticism in a sensitive manner. The climate for democratic learning should be free from autocratic methods and should include active participation, freedom of choice, freedom to express one's ideas, and heightened group identification or sense of belonging. Hunt and Metcalf (1968) argue that climate-building is an important part of a teacher's method, and that the climate of democratic groups be used to stimulate and maintain reflective thinking in the classroom.

Prerequisite Conditions for Stimulating Moral Development in the Classroom

The need for a person's existing thought structures to adapt, or assimilate and accommodate, when confronted with new perspectives on a given conflict eventually leads to a more adequate structure of reasoning. Such interaction requires environmental conditions which permit and support individuals to share their struggles to comprehend complex social reality.

The teacher initiates those conditions necessary to all subsequent interaction that develops at the teacher-student, student-student, and student-with-self levels. This prerequisite does not imply that the teacher is the center and controlling force of the moral education classroom. Rather, the teacher enters the moral education classroom with deliberate and systematic pedagogical skills which are based on the developmental and philosophic rationale previously described. In using these skills the teacher becomes the catalyst whereby interaction leading to development may take place.

Two conditions are fundamental to an environment which will stimulate development: trust and respect and social role-taking. A classroom with these two requirements does not simply "happen" as a result of teacher and students being together over time. The teacher is instrumental in creating such an atmosphere by modeling specific behaviors from the very first teacher-student interaction that takes place. Students are often not accustomed to participating in discussions which center on listening to one another's opinions. It may take time and

patience, for example, to help students understand the importance of sitting in a circle, and to encourage them to do so. In addition, students sometimes "yell out" their responses and impulsively interrupt each other without realizing it. Time must be taken as part of the core of the moral education classroom to teach listening and communication skills.

By virtue of the teacher's own developmental difference as an adult, he or she has a different social, personal, and emotional perspective, and probably a more complex moral reasoning level than that of the students. The teacher brings interpersonal and pedagogical skills into the classroom which hopefully reflect this more complex developmental pattern. Recognition of this difference is fundamental to all other areas of creating a climate within which student development can take place, since the teacher needs to be able to comprehend the perspectives of the students and thereby stimulate their thinking to more complex levels. The reverse of this process is not likely to be true, however. That is, the students may not have the ability to take the cognitive perspective of the adult. In this very crucial sense, the teacher is therefore "first among equals" (Sullivan, 1975), not simply one among equals.

Trust and Respect

Given that the goal of a moral education classroom is to enhance students' development, an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect is essential. There is an interaction between the level of structural development and a student's ability to conceive of a particular concept

like "trust." A seventh-grade youngster who reasons primarily at stage two in moral judgment, for example, has a limited ability to take the perspective of others within a self-indulgent framework of bargaining, characteristic of stage two. That person might conceive of trust as "doing what you can get away with" or not being open with anyone "until you can prove they'll be honest with you, too." A person with a stage-three conception of trust, on the other hand, has the ability to take into account what others believe to be "good" behavior; that individual can then reason out his or her own behavior and that of others according to the standard of another person or group. At stage three trust is perceived as helping to maintain relationships.

It takes time for mutual trust and respect to evolve in the moral education classroom, especially among students who are at the preconventional level of moral reasoning. That is to say that development takes time. Certain activities like role plays and interviews require the group to cooperate in order to organize themselves effectively in deciding what to do and what is fair to expect of each other in accomplishing a task. For students to learn to evaluate their own discussions and role plays means that critical self-reflection and evaluation of others are encouraged in relation to developmental goals.

The teacher's respect for individual autonomy is a related and important aspect of a trusting learning environment which fosters development. Initially the teacher needs to channel any focus on personal disagreements into setting a contract involving what is fair to expect of one another in the group. Before students know each other,

the teacher can also refocus personality clashes into an examination of disagreement about issues. Later, as trust develops, personal conflicts in the group can be presented as "real" moral dilemmas to be worked out by the group.

Part of the respect for autonomy involves the capacity for empathy. Understanding what the students in the class are experiencing from their point of view is a critical aspect of a developmental classroom. Cognitive developmental theory defines the structural aspect of empathy as social role-taking, or the ability to put oneself in the place of another and see the world through the other person's eyes (Selman, 1969).

Social Role-Taking

Taking the perspective of others is a necessary precondition for moral development. Selman (1976) notes that the link between intellectual development and moral development may be found in the ability of a person to take an increasingly differentiated view of the interaction between oneself and others. Hence, teachers must create classroom conditions which call upon the student to practice taking the perspective of others. This process involves helping students to perceive others as similar to themselves but different in respect to their specific thoughts, feelings, and ways of viewing the world. Also important is the development of the ability to see oneself from the viewpoint of others. The four levels of social role-taking ability identified by Selman are presented in Table 1.

A theoretical understanding of the function of social role-taking is important as a basis of teacher and student behavior in the classroom.

Table 1

SOCIAL ROLE-TAKING STAGES

Stage 0 - Egocentric Viewpoint *(Age Range 3-6)*[a] Child has a sense of differentiation of self and others but fails to distinguish between the social perspective (thoughts, feelings) of other and self. Child can label other's overt feelings but does not see the cause and effect relation of reasons to social actions.
Stage 1 - Social-Informational Role-Taking *(Age Range 6-8)* Child is aware that other has a social perspective based on other's own reasoning, which may or may not be similar to child's. However, child tends to focus on one perspective rather than coordinating viewpoints.
Stage 2 - Self-Reflective Role-Taking *(Age Range 8-10)* Child is conscious that each individual is aware of the other's perspective and that this awareness influences self and other's view of each other. Putting self in other's place is a way of judging his intentions, purposes, and actions. Child can form a coordinated chain of perspectives, but cannot yet abstract from this process to the level of simultaneous mutuality.
Stage 3 - Mutual Role-Taking *(Age Range 10-12)* Child realizes that both self and other can view each other mutually and simultaneously as subjects. Child can step outside the two-person dyad and view the interaction from a third-person perspective.
Stage 4 - Social and Conventional System Role-Taking[b] *(Age Range 12-15+)* Person realizes mutual perspective taking does not always lead to complete understanding. Social conventions are seen as necessary because they are understood by all members of the group (the generalized other) regardless of their position, role, or experience (Selman, 1976, p. 309).

[a]Age ranges for all stages represent only an average approximation based on Selman's studies to date.

[b]Higher stages of role-taking have been defined by Byrne (1973).

Moral conflict results from being able to take the perspective of others. The "cognitive dissonance" described by Kohlberg occurs as a result of one's own point of view being confronted by a different perspective. This conflict requires resolution. Individuals realize that their own answers to the problem are inadequate. If people could not assume the role of another, they would see no conflict. The individual's network of social relationships and social interaction forms the basis of each person's primary role-taking opportunities (Kohlberg, 1969). The family, the peer group, and school are the major social institutions in which children have the opportunity to consider the viewpoint of others in making decisions and in understanding the implications of their decisions on others. The more the structure of the group is democratic, the more the individual learns to experience taking the perspective of others.

The teacher in a moral education class is the primary role-taker in the group. The ability of the teacher to take the perspective of each student is a vital "skill." It is all too frequent that during a teacher-student dialogue, the teacher is unaware of how the student perceives a given situation. This failure often leads to a belief on the part of both student and teacher that each is not hearing the other. In one sense this problem is a case of not communicating. Within a cognitive developmental framework this lack can be further identified as an instance of not understanding or not accepting a particular complexity of perspective taking. The onus of failure in this regard, however, must be placed on the teacher, since the teacher will most often

be in a better position to take the perspective of the students rather than the reverse. At the same time the teacher will need to create conditions in which student-to-student dialogue helps to develop an increasingly more differentiated and integrated social role-taking perspective. Questions like, "What do you think so-and-so is thinking about this situation?" or "How would so-and-so think you would resolve this question?" are as important to the development of social role-taking as the question, "What do you think about the problem?"

In summary, then, the development of trust and respect, and social role-taking ability are basic to establishing a fair atmosphere in which moral development can be fostered. As philosopher, the teacher realizes that children and adolescents have the capacity to reason philosophically and to become aware of themselves and others as reasoners. As developmentalist, the teacher wants to stimulate students' thinking to the next higher stage of moral reasoning. And finally, as an interventionist in the educational process, the teacher needs to establish core conditions to facilitate effective interaction which leads to development.

The process of leading a discussion of a moral dilemma is an example which captures the essence of the synthesis of these aspects of teacher preparation for moral education. Tracing the pedagogical steps involved in conducting a moral discussion helps to elucidate the interrelationship between moral development theory and educational practice.

Moral Discussion: A Vehicle for Stimulating Moral Development

The purpose of presenting students with moral dilemmas to discuss is to create thought-provoking dialogue that probes the moral basis of people's thinking from many different perspectives. A moral dilemma is an open-ended conflict situation, hypothetical or real, that requires a resolution of competing rights or claims among people, and for which there is no clear, morally correct solution. Beyer (1976) summarizes the characteristics of an effective moral discussion:

> Regardless of the specific techniques used in conducting a moral discussion, however, the process of confronting a dilemma, taking a tentative position and examining and reflecting on the reasoning behind various positions remain essential activities. Crucial, too, are the student-to-student interaction, the constant focus on moral issues and reasoning, and the emphasis on a supportive trusting, informal classroom atmosphere. The extent to which the teacher can direct the entire process without assuming an expository or authoritarian role largely determines the success of a moral discussion.

The teacher needs to develop enough comptence to facilitate a discussion based on students' moral reasoning patterns. In other words, the teacher must constantly keep in mind the structural level of discourse, including the fact that students often move between different stages in their thinking and that they often seek to avoid issues or entangle themselves in a web of complexity that may result in frustration or withdrawal.

The discussion of moral dilemmas in the classroom is a new experience for most children and adolescents, as documented by the intervention research on moral discussion curricula (Grimes, 1974; Paolitto,

1975; Sullivan, 1975). Moral dilemmas are often not perceived as such by students because parents and teachers make decisions for them before situations have the potential to become those of conflicting obligation or moral choice. In addition, children at the first level of moral development (stages one and two) respond to external rules in making moral decisions and therefore do not see a separation of self from external sources of judgment. Moral conflict often does not exist at stage one because, after all, "it's wrong to steal, period." Confusion is also evident when students create moral dilemmas out of non-moral situations. As one thirteen-year-old described, "Of course whether to paint your bike blue or green can be a very important moral dilemma! I'd paint my bike from green to blue any day to hide it if I stole it!"

In the initial phases of leading moral discussions, the teacher must be very active in teaching a process of inquiring into moral issues. Helping students to recognize that they are indeed thoughtful reasoners and to articulate elements of conflict in a situation are important first steps for students to experience. Posing questions that provoke cognitive dissonance, as a result of students' exposure to more complex ways of seeing the world than their own (i.e., a higher stage of reasoning), is a second step. The teacher has the responsibility of ensuring that students are exposed to the stage of reasoning above their own (Blatt, 1970; Blatt and Kohlberg, 1975). This the teacher may do by either utilizing his or her own higher stage arguments or by eliciting those same arguments from students.

When leading moral discussions for the first time, teachers often experience a disappointment that accompanies a simple "Yes" or "No"

answer to a "Should" question, or a mere "Because" reply to a "Why?" question. A paucity of response is particularly true from students who are not highly articulate or verbal. The sequencing of qualitatively different types of questions and comments is therefore important for the teacher to consider:

(1) Asking "Why?" questions. Asking why somebody should resolve a certain moral conflict in a particular way helps students identify situations as dilemmas which require resolution from a conflict of choice. Such questions also, of course, elicit one's level of moral reasoning more easily than most other types of questions. Questions like, "Why do you think your solution to the dilemma is a good one?" or "What is the main reason you decided to resolve the problem as you did?" are two examples.

(2) Complicating the circumstances. Adding new situations to the original dilemma increases thoughtful, differentiated responses to a problem. This strategy also helps students to avoid "escape hatches." "Escape hatches" involve changing the nature of the facts of the dilemma, thereby effectively solving the dilemma by eliminating it as a conflict situation. For example, in a dilemma concerning the decision to throw certain people overboard from an overcrowded lifeboat drifting at sea, students commonly avoid confronting the dilemma by asking to tie the extra people to the side of the boat with ropes. To help students face the moral question in this case, the teacher might say, "Suppose there were no ropes in the lifeboat." The teacher might also complicate the dilemma in this instance: "Suppose holding the ropes would sink the lifeboat--if you had to choose between a mother and her eighteen-year-old son, who should be cast overboard?"

(3) Presenting "personal" examples. Such examples give students the realization that moral dilemmas are a part of their daily social interaction, as well as the source of many problems and solutions in the society at large. "Personal" in this sense implies situations within the experience of students and the teacher. A dilemma in the news or on a television program is as much a personal one in this context as a "personal problem." If a dilemma is personal, then there is likely to be high interest and emotional investment on the part of students. Such situations give a person pause to think about daily problems in new ways. Conflicts over different people's rights in the cafeteria, corridors, and classroom are especially fruitful sources of personal dilemmas. Real dilemmas can be written and presented by students themselves, such as this example co-authored by two eighth-grade girls:

> One table of girls constantly leaves their trays on the table. Because of this the cafeteria workers say that everyone who eats that period can't have ice cream until those trays and a few other scattered trays start getting cleared on a regular basis.
>
> Unfortunately, the girls at that table don't buy ice cream anyway, so they don't care.
>
> Should everyone get deprived of ice cream because of a few people? Why or why not?
>
> What should they do now that they know the ice cream punishment isn't working? For instance, should they punish each individual who doesn't clean his or her tray, individually? Why would the solution you choose be a good one? (Paolitto, 1975, p. 362)

(4) Alternating real and hypothetical dilemmas. This format helps to expand the range of the students' notion of what constitutes a moral problem. This variation also takes into account the range of student interests in the class.

Hypothetical dilemmas are imaginary conflict situations which highlight and often polarize particular rights or obligations to dramatize the moral components of a problem. "The Desert" (Blatt, Colby, & Speicher, 1974) is one such dilemma:

> Two people had to cross a desert. When they started, both had equal amounts of food and water. When they were in the middle of the desert, one person's water bag broke and all his water ran out. They both knew that if they shared the water they would probably die of thirst. If one had the water, that person would survive.
>
> What should they do? Give your reasons. ("Why" question)
>
> Suppose the two people are husband and wife. Should that change the issue and the decision? (Complicating the circumstances)

Hypothetical dilemmas in early sessions of the class also help students to develop trust through sharing the common experience of discussing crucial situations. At the same time, students do not feel prematurely "pushed" toward self-disclosure before the group is ready to respond at a level of personal acceptance.

For adolescents in particular, a combination of hypothetical and real, personal dilemmas make sense developmentally and "works" in the classroom (DiStefano, 1976). For those at the beginning stages of formal operational thinking, or Piaget's conception of abstract reasoning ability, the intriguing aspect of hypothetical dilemmas may be the abstract dimensions which they entail. Part of this development of abstract intellectual thinking involves the ability to be self-reflective. Real, personal dilemmas, therefore, can complement hypothetical dilemmas, since they stimulate reasoning about the self in relation to others.

Given the self-consciousness that accompanies the discovery of self, it seems important to provide a variety of opportunities for adolescents to move between the hypothetical and the real.

These four considerations constitute the "core" of the introduction to moral dilemma discussions. They involve an exposure to the breadth of the notion of moral dilemmas. How long the teacher concentrates his or her efforts on teaching students to consider the range of moral considerations in conflict situations depends on the nature of the particular group of students.

The second phase of a moral discussion format involves a <u>focus in depth</u>. The teacher's questioning techniques parallel this change in effort.

(1) <u>Presenting few questions</u>. Fewer questions means a sustained focus through to a resolution of conflict. Questions should probe many sides of the same issue. A "Why?" question is not sufficient at this point. Students need to hear extended arguments from each other so they can understand the reasoning and challenge each other's logic. Beyer (1976) offers five types of probing questions:

I. Clarifying probe—anything from Why; to What do you mean by . . . , or Then are you saying . . . ?

II. Issue-specific probe—asks students to examine their own thoughts about one of the major issues identified by Kohlberg—obligation, contract, authority.

III. Inter-issue probe—asks what to do when two issues conflict, e.g., loyalty to President versus loyalty to Constitution; loyalty to friend versus obligation to the law.

IV. Role switch probe—asks student to put self into the position of someone in the dilemma in order to see the other side.

V. Universal consequence probe—asking person to consider what would happen if such reasoning were applied to everyone.

Probing usually involves role-taking questions that are effective in pursuing motives, intentions, and personalities of characters in dilemmas. Spontaneous role plays when students are "stuck" trying to resolve a certain issue can be tremendously helpful. Students are ready to role play when trust and acceptance have developed in the group. Concentration in depth also alleviates the problem of escape hatches. We assume that this in-depth period of questioning is the part of the moral discussion process where sustained cognitive dissonance leads to structural change.

(2) Referring to the history of the group. The teacher can link the present discussion to earlier discussions to help students see commonalities and differences. It is especially important to refer to earlier solutions of particular students. This helps students become aware of changes in reasoning in themselves and their classmates.

(3) Clarifying and summarizing. The teacher's role changes to that of clarifier and summarizer, rather than that of major initiator of topic questions. Students by this phase of discussion have learned how to approach questions of moral conflict; they can ask "Why?" questions. The teacher therefore becomes a more active listener in order to link crucial elements of discussion.

Conclusion

Teachers, like their students, are moral philosophers. Teachers too must ask questions of what is right and what is good before entering the classroom as well as during actual classroom interaction. The

classroom itself confronts teachers and students with a myriad of potential moral dilemmas surrounding issues like cheating, stealing, truth-telling and keeping promises. The teacher must also be a developmentalist, with a knowledge of the psychology of moral development and the pedagogy of moral discussions. At best aspects of these two roles have always been a part of some teachers. The developmental perspective as a rationale for education demands that teachers become competent not only in knowledge and skills in their content area, but also in the ability to create the conditions for social interaction conducive to developmental change. To realize the teacher's function as developmental educator, one must be able to take the social perspective of each of the stages reflected in the reasoning of one's students, and to create an environment in which students are brought into contact with those differing perspectives.

The teacher who engages in a cognitive developmental approach to moral education is not only a moral discussion leader. The essence of moral education is that the teacher create the opportunity for students to organize their own experience in more complex ways. The moral educator is actually teaching the students a cognitive developmental approach for pursuing their own education after the formal educational process has ended. To learn the tenets of rationalism, or learning by reasoning, as well as to see the world in the eyes of another—these are the fundamental experiences of moral education.

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